

Message Text

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SUBJECT:VISIT TO U.S. OF BULGARIAN PATRIARCH MAXIM

1. BULGARIAN EMBASSY CHARGE HIMMIRSKY CALLED ON EUR/EE DIRECTOR AND BULGARIAN DESK OFFICER ON AUGUST 1 TO INTRODUCE THE RT. REV. BISHOP SIMEON, THE HEAD OF THE BULGARIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH'S U.S., CANADIAN AND AUSTRALIAN DIOCESES. (BISHOP SIMEON'S RESPONSIBILITIES EXCLUDE NEW YORK STATE, WHICH IS HEADED BY METROPOLITAN JOSEPH.) SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION FOLLOWS.

2. BISHOP SIMEON INFORMED US OF THE UPCOMING SEPTEMBER 1-OCTOBER 5 VISIT TO THE U.S. OF BULGARIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH PATRIARCH MAXIM, WHICH, THE BISHOP SAID, AFTER THE VISIT HERE SEVERAL YEARS AGO BY THE PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH, WOULD BE ONLY THE SECOND VISIT EVER BY AN EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH PATRIARCH TO THE U.S. BISHOP SIMEON SAID MAXIM WILL VISIT SELECTED BULGARIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH CONGREGA-
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TIONS AND WILL CONSECRATE TWO NEW CHURCHES IN AKRON AND LORRAINE, OHIO. HIS PARTY OF SIX WILL INCLUDE THREE METROPOLITANS, ONE ARCH-DEACON (HIS PERSONAL PHYSICIAN), AND A PROFESSOR SABETH, A CHURCH HISTORIAN. COPIES OF SEVERAL DOCUMENTS CONCERNING THE VISIT, INCLUDING THE ITINERARY, WHICH THE BISHOP PROVIDED TO UARE BEING

POUCHED TO THE EMBASSY.

3. BISHOP SIMEON ASKED ABOUT SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAXIM'S VISIT, AND IMPLIED THAT A FEW HOTHEADS AMONG RECENT BULGARIAN IMMIGRANTS COULD TRY PUBLICLY TO EMBARRASS HIM. HE NOTED THAT SOME OF THESE IMMIGRANTS IDENTIFY THE BULGARIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH WITH COMMUNISM AND ARE PRESSURING IT TO BREAK WITH THE MOTHER CHURCH IN BULGARIA. A FEW INCIDENTS, SUCH AS SIT-INS IN CHURCHES AFTER SERVICES, HAVE ALREADY OCCURED. IN RESPONSE, WE UNDERTOOK TO ENSURE THAT THE LOCAL POLICE AUTHORITIES IN ALL OF THE CITIES PATRIARCH MAXIM WILL VISIT ARE AWARE OF HIS SCHEDULE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF HIS VISIT.

4. BISHOP SIMEON INFORMED US THAT DR. WILSON, THE SENATE CHAPLAIN, WILL ARRANGE A PROGRAM FOR THE PATRIARCH AT THE CAPITOL ON SEPTEMBER 21, INCLUDING A TOUR OF THE CAPITOL, LUNCH WITH THE OHIO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION AND PERHAPS OTHERS, AND A VISIT TO A SESSION OF THE HOUSE OR SENATE. THE BISHOP NOTED THAT HE HAD NOT INFORMED THE WHITE HOUSE ABOUT THE PATRIARCH'S VISIT AND WE ASSURED HIM THAT WE WOULD DO SO. WE ALSO ADDED THAT THE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE PLEASED TO ASSIST IN THE RESOLUTION OF ANY SPECIAL PROBLEMS BUT THAT, AS OF NOW, PREPARATIONS SEEMED WELL IN HAND. VANCE

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